target by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) & Essar Oil Limited in January-February, 2008, delay in movement of bulk LPG by rail from Jamnagar to the Northern Region, increased demand in the States due to severe cold which resulted in panic booking by the customers, strikes by contract labour, agitational activities, delays in berthing of vessels at Haldia Port due to reduced draft bandhs etc.

Government had advised OMCs to liquidate the backlog in the country by operating the bottling plants on holidays and during extended hours. Increased bottling was also done during the working days for early clearance of backlog.

At present, OMCs have not reported any backlog in supply of LPG in the country. OMCs are monitoring the situation on a day-to-day basis and corrective action is being taken wherever required.

(b) The possibility of blackmarketing/diversion of subsidized domestic LPG cylinders by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to the wide gap between the retail price of LPG for domestic use and the market price for commercial LPG.

In order to stop blackmarketing/diversion of domestic LPG cylinders, the Government has enacted "Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000" and formulated "Marketing Discipline Guidelines, 2001" whcih provides for penal action against LPG distributors indulging in diversion/blackmarketing of LPG.

Whenever OMCs receive complaints, these are investigated and if the complaint is established, suitable action is taken against the LPG distributor(s) in accordance with the provisions of the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG). MDG provides for following action against the distributor:—

— Fine of Rs. 20,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 1st offence.

— Fine of Rs. 50,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 2nd offence.

— Termination of the distributorship for 3rd offence.

In addition to the action taken by the OMCs, State Governments are empowered under the LPG (Regulation of Supply & Distribution) Order, 2000 promulgated under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to take action against blackmarketing/diversion of domestic LPG. Similarly, the weights and Measures Departments of the States/UTs initiate legal action against those LPG distributors found blackmarketing/diversion of LPG cylinders. The State Governments have been alerted from time to time to take steps against the blackmarketing/ diversion of domestic cylinders for unauthorized usage.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. Government is not considering any proposal for selling LPG cylinders through petrol pumps, as the present regulations do not permit sale of LPG cylinders at petrol pumps.

Reduction in domestic quota for cooking gas

3823. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cooking gas petroleum companies have reduced the domestic quota of cooking gas per family from 8 Kg to 5 Kg;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the dealers are misutilizing the domestic gas by diverting to commercial consumers (hoteliers, motor vehicles etc.) for higher rates;

(d) if so, whether due to misutilization there is a shortage in the supply of gas to domestic consumers; and

(e) if so, the action taken by Government against the persons resorting to misutilization of gas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (e) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that there is no quota per family fixed for supply of LPG cylinders for domestic consumption. OMCs have further reported that at present, there is no overall shortage of LPG in the country and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the OMCs through indegenous production and imports in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors.

The possibility of diversion of subsidized domestic LPG cylinders by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to the wide gap between the retail price of LPG for domestic use and the market price for commercial LPG.

In order to stop diversion of domestic LPG cylinders, the Government has enacted "Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000" and formulated "Marketing Discipline Guidelines, 2001" which provides for penal action against LPG distributors indulging in diversion of LPG.

Whenever OMCs receive complaints, these are investigated and if the complaint is established, suitable action is taken against the LPG distributor(s) in accordance wtih the provisions of the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG). MDG provides for following action against the distributor:—

— Fine of Rs. 20,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 1st offence.

— Fine of Rs. 50,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 2nd offence.

— Termination of the distributorship for 3rd offence.

In addition to the action taken by the OMCs, State Governments are empowered under the LPG (Regulation of Supply & Distribution) Order, 2000 promulgated under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to take action against diversion of domestic LPG. Similarly, the Weights and Measures Departments of the States/UTs initiate legal action against those LPG distributors found diverting LPG cylinders. The State Governments have been alerted from time to time to take steps against the diversion of domestic cylinders for unauthorized usage.

Government have issued advertisements cautioning the public that use of domestic LPG for non-domestic purposes is illegal, dangerous and against national interest. Through these advertisements, cooperation of the general public has also been sought to report any irregularity/malpractice to the OMCs.

The officials of OMCs carry out random checks at distributors godowns, delivery points, as well as en-route to ensure that no misuse takes place. The distributors of OMCs are under strict instructions to check the weight of cylinders at their godowns before delivery, and only cylinders with the specified weight are to be delivered to the customers. The distributors have also been instructed to ensure that the seals are verified & shown to the customers at the time of delivery. In case any under-weight cylinder is received by the customer, such cylinders are replaced free of charge by the OMCs.

Cost escalation in Indo-Iran gas pileline project

3824. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has received invitation from his counterpart in Pakistan to discuss strategies of Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the delay in Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline has severe cost escalation; and

(d) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to finalize the strategy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) An invitation was received from Minister for Petroleum & Natural Resources, Government of Pakistan for participation of an Indian delegation led by Minister (Petroleum & Natural Gas) in a Ministerial-level meeting for discussions on pending bilateral issues concerning Iran-Pakistan India (IPI) Gas Pipeline Project to be held in Islamabad, Pakistan. The above mentioned meeting has been held in Islamabad on April 25, 2008.

(c) and (d) Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests and to avoid any problems in the future in the successful operation of the project.

CNG distribution centre in Rajasthan

†3825. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of CNG distribution centres setup for the use by vehicles in various States during last three years;

(b) whether any CNG distribution centres have been setup in any city in Rajasthan during this period;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) by when the guidelines issued by Hon'ble Rajasthan High Court, Jodhpur will be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) The number of CNG outlets opened during the last

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.